

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-18, 20 and 21 are pending. Claims 1, 8, 11, 15, and 20 are amended. Claims 1, 8 and 15 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-7, 9-14, and 17-21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicants appreciate the Examiner's early indication of allowable subject matter. As indicated below,

independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 2;

independent claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 10; and

independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 19.

Therefore, independent claims 1, 8, and 15 are in condition for allowance.

Drawings

The Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Clarification is requested in the next official communication.

Claim for Priority

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has recognized the Applicant's claim for foreign priority.

Acknowledgement of Information Disclosure Statement

It is gratefully appreciated that the Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statements filed on March 23, 2005 and July 13, 2004.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 8 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishizu (U.S. 6,729,354) in view of Biel, Jr. et al. (U.S. 6,884,398). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As mentioned above, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the present application,

independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 2;

independent claim 8 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 10; and

independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 19.

Therefore, independent claims 1, 8, and 15 are in condition for allowance.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of elements as set forth in each of independent claim 1, 8, and 15 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Ishizu and Biel, Jr., at least for the reasons explained above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2, 10, and 19 have been cancelled.

All pending dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, as well as for the additional novel limitations set forth therein.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
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By



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